

Customer Care Standards



Introduction

Our Vision

An organisation that provides consistently high-quality customer services, which add value to the customer and to the Council.

Strategy

The standard of service a customer receives when they contact the Council will influence their view of the Council and potentially the area it serves. At a time when customer expectations are continually changing, and councils are striving to make efficiencies.

- We aim to address these challenges by making the best use of technology to deliver cost effective services to customers.
- Prevent valuable resources being wasted on providing poor customer service.
- Transform services to make them simple to deliver and easy for customers to access, whilst making use of social media and other methods of communication.

We work to: -

- Transform services to make them streamlined and easy for you to access and for us to deliver.
- Embed a culture of good practice across the Authority where staff and customers are clear about the standards of service they can expect to receive.

Council Values

People - a people focused business

Performance - as individuals and a collective

Pride - in our work and outcomes achieved

Partnership - delivering outcomes through partnership

"We value all feedback that the Council receives. We will maintain an effective complaints process and ensure that we respond promptly and appropriately. We will ensure that we consult and engage with stakeholders in an open and transparent manner. Our ambition can only be delivered by continuing to transform and modernise the way we work in order to deliver best value, by recognising the partnership and community interests of many other stakeholders in delivering this plan, and by working to maximise the effectiveness of all those with whom we share a common goal."

Chief Executive: Stephen Walford, Corporate Plan 2024-28

Outcome

We aim to get it right first time to promote high regard and trust in the Council. We will keep you informed on progress of your enquiry.

When you contact us, you can expect us to:

- Achieve targets and service delivery
- Aim to get it right first time to promote high regard and trust in the Council
- Keep customers informed on progress or delays
- Achieve high satisfaction ratings
- Acknowledge and learn from mistakes
- Have a robust Complaints Policy and Procedure

Choice

Our intention is to make it easy for you to contact us and to always provide a friendly and professional service.

- We aim to provide access to services 24/7 via on-line and digital channels whilst retaining choices including telephone, email, post and in-person visits during office hours
- During office hours, we will offer an appointment service to achieve mutual convenience, either face to face or virtually
- We will offer telephone interpretation services where English is not your first language to make it easier for you to understand and communicate with us
- We will support services including Type Talk for hearing impaired customers
- If you need a private space to talk to someone, we will arrange that for you, this may mean coming back later if there is no space available at the time

- We will provide an emergency service outside of our normal working hours

Quality

We will offer a service which reflect the core values of the council, ensuring that the focus remains on you, the customer.

When you contact us, you can expect us to:

- Resolve your enquiry wherever possible at the first point of contact
- Offer a range of access options including interpretation service for other languages
- Identify and address any special needs with sensitivity
- Clearly define timescales for service delivery
- We will aim to avoid unnecessary further contact

Speed

We aim to resolve queries at the first point of contact. If this is not possible, we will find the right person who can help*

When you use social media

- We will monitor our main Facebook account during normal working hours (except bank holidays and public holidays)

- If you contact us via these channels during these times we will respond as soon as possible. There could be delays whilst we investigate but we will keep you updated or log a request for assistance with the appropriate service

When you use our online forms

- We will acknowledge your email within three working days
- We will provide the name of the service you have contacted
- We will normally provide a full response to your query in ten working days
- If we are unable to answer your query in ten working days, we will keep you informed (this does not include service requests where there are statutory deadlines for responses i.e., Planning Applications)

When you email us

- We will acknowledge your email within three working days
- We will provide our name and the name of the service you have contacted
- We will normally provide a full response to your email in ten working days
- If we are unable to answer your query in ten working days, we will keep you informed (this does not include service requests where there are statutory deadlines for responses i.e., Planning Applications)

When you telephone us

- We will answer your call in a friendly and professional manner
- We will aim to answer your call quickly, although at busy times there may be a short wait
- If we need to transfer your call, we will explain the nature of your call to the person you need to speak to. If their voicemail is on, we will retrieve the call and offer to transfer you to the voicemail, or offer to take a message for the person to contact you
- Occasionally you may get through to an officer's voicemail, these will be checked regularly, messages will be up to date and confirm officer availability and alternative contacts if available

When you write to us by post

- We will acknowledge your letter within five working days
- We will normally provide a full response within ten working days of receipt
- If we are unable to fully respond within ten working days, we will tell you within those 10 days when you can expect a full response

When you visit Customer Services

- We will provide 15-minute appointments to deal with your enquiries face to face
- If you require assistance from an officer from a service, e.g., Planning or Housing, we will assist you understanding how that can be arranged
- If you have an appointment, you will normally be seen on time
- If you do not have an appointment, we will make one with you for the next available slot

*Some services have statutory response times which may differ from those identified in these standards. Service specific details are provided on our web pages where applicable.

Behaviour

You can expect our staff to have a professional, helpful, courteous attitude whilst observing council values.

When you contact us, you can expect us to:

- Have a professional, helpful, and courteous attitude
- Maintain confidentiality
- Listen to your enquiry
- Take ownership of the enquiry
- Explain what we can do to help or find someone who can help you

When you visit us:

- Staff will greet you in a polite, courteous, and professional manner

- Where possible we will assist you with use of public access computers to self-serve

When you telephone us:

- We will answer in a polite and courteous manner with a standard greeting
- We will provide you with a name and name of the service you have called

Additional Support

Mid Devon District Council is responsible for delivering a range of services to the people who live, work, and visit and invest in the area. The Council are committed to equality and improving quality of life for everyone across the district.

We recognise how important accessible information and buildings are:

- We aim to ensure that our building is accessible for everyone who wants to visit us
- Our reception will be accessible, welcoming, and clean
- In our reception area and meeting rooms there are loop systems in place for customers with hearing loss
- We aim to publish information in plain language that is easy to understand, without jargon and unnecessary abbreviations
- If a customer who does not speak English contacts us, we will arrange for telephone interpretation services to assist with the enquiry